

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. Sinclair compares its showing of this patently biased anti Kerry production to the showing of the film "Fahrenheit 9/11." However, there is one very important difference. "Fahrenheit 9/11" is a commercial film and was shown in commercial movie theatres--one had to leave one's home and pay to see it. It was not shown over public airways--OUR airways. It did not come into our homes--we had to make an effort to see it. If Sinclair chose to show this film on a Pay-for-view station, it would be different--but we should not have this or any biased production--no matter from which party--coming to us over public airways disguised as "news." (and without allowing the local stations to opt out--that is very heavy-handed. where is our local right to decide? I guess we could just turn off the television, but that still doesn't solve the use of public airways for private agendas. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.